

LSU vs. Central Michigan
September 18, 2021

LSU Head Coach Ed Orgeron Quotes

Opening statement...

“We made some improvement tonight. I was very pleased with our up-tempo offense. Very pleased with the play by our young receivers. I thought our quarterback, for the most part, played really well. I think Max [Johnson] had five touchdowns. You got to see what we’ve seen in practice with Deion Smith and those young receivers and a young running back in [Corey] Kiner. I thought our defense played solid. We were very disappointed we gave up those big plays. It was a missed assignment, and we have to fix that and fix it fast. For the most part, we played a very good game. There are still some things we have to get better at. Special teams, we have to get better field position. We lost a lot of field possession on that return and the punts. We need a better scheme, and we have to gain field position on special teams. This week, we have to continue to grow in our offense as a hurry-up, doing the things that we can do and allowing our players to make plays and continue to not get beat on deep balls. I thought our defensive line played well. They gave us max protect and we got five sacks. I thought we were going to have more, but give [Central Michigan] credit, they did a good job of protecting him.”

On if LSU is ready for SEC play next week...

“We saw improvement. I told our team, ‘This isn’t about Central Michigan. This about us. Our identity. Who we’re going to be, and what are the things that we are going to do well as a football team?’ I think you saw some of them tonight.”

On if that’s what he expected from the offense...

“It’s the beginning. I thought we were in-sync, especially in the first and second quarter. I liked the shots, although we didn’t get Kayshon [Boutte] on the first play, we opened up with a shot. I think it opened up the defense a little bit and we passed to set up the run, that was our plan. The run game came alive in the fourth quarter, so I think we did a lot of good things, but there’s still some things we have to get better at. There’s a lot of great athletes out there, we should be a lot better on offense as we continue to grow.”

On Jack Bech and Deion Smith’s performances...

“It was good. It was fun to see them do it in Tiger Stadium, I see them do it all the time in practice and they finally got their chance. Deion [Smith] was the No. 1 player out of Mississippi, he’s done a tremendous job for us and he’s only going to get better. Jack Bech is a baller. He practices hard and he wants to ball. He’s got the heart of a Tiger and we love having him. Both of those guys are going to be great players, along with Malik Nabers, along with Chris Hilton. Those guys are going to be great players for us.”

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LSU Player Quotes

Linebacker Damone Clark

On the defensive effort...

“I’m proud of the way the defense played today. We had a few busts, but that’s what practice and watching the film is for. But overall, I’m excited about our effort; just flying to the ball and being relentless. We have a few things to correct but we will get it fixed.”

On the confidence controlling the line of scrimmage...

“I tip my hat off to the coaches. They harped on about just stopping the run. I’m proud of the d-line and the linebackers. I’m just excited. Coach O and Coach Carter always tell us ‘You stop the run on 3rd down, we can have some fun.’”

On this week’s improvement...

“Every week we want to take it one step at a time. We had a few things we had to correct from last week, and I feel we took the next step. The only way to go is up, we just have to keep elevating and doing what we do.”

Quarterback Max Johnson

On the confidence he has gained...

“I think I have grown a lot of confidence in our guys. I think they have done a great job just getting open and making a lot of great catches. I have grown in confidence in Coach Peetz as well, he has done a great job of calling the game. I’m looking forward to going back to work this week.

On the freshmen being involved...

“Putting Kayshon in the slot allowed us to open up some other things for the other receivers such as Deion [Smith] and BT [Brian Thomas Jr]. Devonta Lee made some good catches, putting our guys in space and trying to get them the ball is what we are trying to do throughout the game.

About getting to where they want to be...

“Coach Peetz gave us a lot of confidence to go out there and have fun. I think that’s what we did; we put up a lot of points. We had some stuff that we have to get better, and I’m just looking forward to getting back to work this week.”

Defensive End BJ Ojulari

On what he took from this game...

“This is one of the games that we needed to build our confidence and find our identity. That was the LSU defense you saw tonight. As we go into SEC play, we just want to continue that effort and that intensity.

On how they were able to stop the run...

“We had a great practice, great scheme, and our interior lineman and our linebackers did a great job. We set the edge, and everything came together.”

On the fumble return on the first possession...

“[Derek] Stingley came down and made a great hit, and Andre returned it for a touchdown. That set the tone for the whole game and the defense, and it set our intensity. All game, we focused on hitting the running back and trying to make him quit.”

Cornerback Derek Stingley Jr.

On the team’s performance tonight...

“Coming into the game, we knew we were going to have to stop their running game and hit the running backs. That’s just what was on my mind the whole time.”

On how much tonight’s win boosts momentum

going into SEC play...

“It’s exciting for what’s coming for the rest of the season. We know that we still have a couple of things to fix though, and we’re going to get it done. It’s good because we know the offense is going to go out there and do their thing, and the offense can trust us to get some stops. As a whole team, that’s the best thing to have.”

On how he felt watching the young players making plays in the game...

“It’s good to see all the young bucks out there and making plays! All the receivers are flying around and making big plays. That’s something we see every day in practice, so it’s good to see them balling in the game. It was good to see Major’s (Burns) interception because during practice he’s always ready for everything and knows what he has to do. When he got the interception, the only thing I could do is smile because it was something we were all waiting to see.”

Wide Receiver Jack Bech

On his confidence level and how much it’s grown from the start of the season...

“It’s grown a lot, especially with our coaching staff. Every day at practice, the coaches and players are hyping people up. I think that the first two games were kind of flukes. I think everybody saw what we were made of tonight; we’re going to put the country on notice and they’re going to feel this. Personally, I think my confidence has been going up game-by-game. I’ve gotten a couple more passes and been able to show out more recently, which I think has helped a lot. But really, it’s just a game that I’ve been playing since I was four or five years old. Catch the ball, run with the ball, go up and make plays, and score. It’s the same thing as it’s always been, as well as trying to block out the people watching, but I do think my confidence has gone up a little bit.”

On his connection he’s built with Quarterback Max Johnson...

“Max and I have been close since I committed, really. We talked before I got on campus, and I would get to know Max and throw with him to get touches. The whole team has good chemistry and connection right now and that was us working on it all summer. We grinded hard and put in a lot of time to the game, but it does feel good to be one of those guys that can help push the team and help us get out with some wins.”

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Central Michigan Quotes

Head Coach Jim McElwain Quotes

Opening statement...

“Obviously disappointed in the outcome. We came in with an expectation that we would be able to play with these guys. There were some good things and some positives that we can take out it, yet you don’t want it. It’s never easy to lose and I don’t care who you lose to. It hurts. We’ve got to do a good job of bouncing back and getting ready next week. Hopefully we can get a great crowd there. Bounce back and get ready for league play.

On what the day looked like for the team leaving this morning...

“It’s a long day. I’ll tell you that. But that’s no excuse. There’s a lot of people here in this part of the country that have a lot of things going on with the storms and what they’re dealing with. They had taken some hotel rooms away but so what. We got up today and went on the plane and carried our pads and came and played a ball game and that’s alright. That’s the way it is. When you think of it, there’s a lot bigger things in life. What they’re dealing with down here with the power outages and floods, and obviously their running back coach losing a family member, it’s dotter. These guys are going through a lot as well.

On what the positives were from this game...

“The short time we’ve been here I’m not so sure we didn’t fold our tents a couple times that first year and I didn’t see that from these guys. That really says a lot about our team and our locker room. We’re getting there. We’re getting a lot better. It’s going to take a little bit of time and at the same time, like I tell the guys, this isn’t about building. The time is now. We’ve got to come back and play well this week and get ready to go into league and learn from what we’ve gone through here. We’ve got to move forward. We have a lot of good players. The rest of the league has a bunch of good players. We’re going to see a bunch of speed and good players next week. We just have to pick ourselves back up and put a plan together and go play great in front of the home crowd.

Tight End Joel Wilson

On the game in general and scoring the first touchdown...

“It always feels good to get your first touchdown but, that wasn’t even my main focus. I was more focused on whether we needed more points on the board. We didn’t get the start we wanted to get. Our run game wasn’t working the way we wanted it to. It was kind of a slow start for us trying to get anything going. Yeah, they’re a good team, credit to them, but I felt like we were prepared. We had a good week of practice, and we should have played better this game. It felt great to get my first touchdown. It’s a surreal feeling, especially to get it at Death Valley. That’s what I got for that.”

On his role in the game...

"I was hoping to be a big part of the game plan. I thought that I had a good week of practice and was mentally prepared. I was all in ready to play this game. You know, it happened the way it happened. I'm glad I was a big part of the game. I wish I could've helped more. Yeah, I felt like I was prepared."

On how the team reacted to the game results...

"It's always tough to have a start like that. We always want to win the turnover battle because that's one of the main aspects of winning the football game. The thing about that is that history is history. That's in the past. We were doing our best to keep a clear focus and play it play-by-play. Kind of have to steam on forward."